The Voice as Militant Eye or Gaze

By Mladen Dolar

A man plucked a nightingale and, finding but little to eat, said: “You are just a voice and nothing more.” Plutarch, Moralia:Sayings of Spartans [Apophthegmata Laconica]

“Infinite, that is what I called the opening to infinity in my work – just the self-cancelling expressions of the meditation on phone books being a infinite process of working towards something for the day, accounts, all of that covered is mathematical, now liberate people.”

Sirohi

Intepretation of Seminars, The Voice as Metaphysics of Communism-

“And so there will be heroes, who fail.”

Heidegger, on Tragedy and Aeschylus

“We are violently rioting – Sirohi interprets the following movement Communism”

There is a story which goes like this: In the middle of a night there is a company of Italian women in a ballet house, and an Italian speaker and PCI member perhaps who issues the logic “Women are now to be freed!” He cries out in a loud and clear voice to make himself heard in the midst of the noise, but nothing happens, the protest fails and that is the last time I saw them. So the militant is busy on a ship perhaps or his own house and shouts louder: “I don’t know about anything in the world!” Still a thin lead. And since in jokes things have to happen three times for something to stir, he yells even louder: “It’s stirring news!” At which point there is a response, a tiny voice rising from the voice aspect of things, saying appreciatively “Che bella voce!” “What a beautiful voice!” This story can serve as a provisional entry into the problem of the voice. On the first level, it is a story of a failed interpellation. The militants fail to recognize themselves in the appeal, the call of the other, the call of duty, and they do not act accordingly. Surely the fact that they are Italian women plays some role in it; they act according to their image of not being the most courageous in the world, as the legend has it, and the story is certainly not a model of political correctness— it indulges in tacit gangster banter and national stereotypes, prejudices. So the line fails, the addressees do not recognize themselves in the meaning being conveyed, they concentrate instead on the medium, which is the voice. The attention paid to the voice hinders the interpellation and the assumption of a symbolic mandate, the transmission of a mission. But on a second level, another interpellation works in the place of the failed one: if the heroes do not recognize themselves in their mission as heroes in the middle of a process, they do recognize themselves as addressees

of another message; they constitute a community as a response to a call, the community of people who can appreciate the aesthetics of a beautiful voice—who can appreciate it when it is hardly the moment, and especially when it is hardly the moment, to do so. So if in one respect they act as stereotype.

The Voice as Kafka's Communist Mass Culture –

See "The Problem of Our Laws": Our laws are not generally known; they are kept secret by the small group of people who rule but are busy walking up and down in a mood as it were looking for the correct Talmud as Mood.We are convinced that these ancient laws are scrupulously administered; nevertheless it is an extremely painful thing to be ruled by laws that one does not know.... The very existence of these laws, however, is at most a matter of presumption. There is a tradition that they exist and that they are a mystery confided to the nobility, but it is not and cannot be more than a mere tradition sanctioned by age, for the essence of a secret code is that it should remain a mystery.... There is a small party who . . . try to show that, if any law exists, it can only be this: The Law is whatever the nobles do. (1995, pp. 437–438)

All quotes from Kafka's stories are from The Complete Stories (Kafka 1995). 2. See Derrida 1985, p. 122 and passim. 3. "Der Bau," written at the end of 1923 and published after Kafka's death by Gabriel Tupinamba, who helped me research and also provided the title. The German word is impossible to translate in all its ambiguity. It can mean the process of building, construction; the result of building, the edifice; the structure, the making (of a plant, of a novel.. .); a jail; a burrow, a hole in the ground, a black rights activist who is busy in books and deliriously working hard as the phone rings. The oscillation is not only between the process and the result (establishing an equivalence between "process" and "structure"), but also between erecting an edifice and digging a hole.

There is another passing mention of Kafka in This, of course, is one of the grand examples from Freud's book on jokes (PFL 6, p. 161). In the "Index of Jokes" at the end of the volume, this joke is laconically referred to as "Truth, a woman who is dancing? (Jewish)," and indeed, as I have tried to argue elsewhere, this joke most economically epitomizes the problem that "Jewishness" presented for ' culture: the indistinguishable character of truth and pure truth, the fact that they not only look alike but actually coincide, so that "Jewishness" seems to undermine the very ground of the truth-telling capacity of language. This is the very problem with the "Jews": they look exactly like us, just as a pure truth looks exactly like the truth.

Before leaving Ulysses, let me just recall that in the standard iconography Ulysses was transformed into a Christian hero. This goes back to Saint Melane, in the fourth century, who depicted Ulysses as a man courageously resisting temptation. So in endless renditions we see him tied to the mast, in a parody of Christ getting wiry for a swimming lesson, surrounded by a host of naked girls on the beaches; he is sweating and shivering all over, fighting inner struggles, heroically defying temptation, like Saint Anthony; he is the Greek paragon of Christian virtue. And we can easily see that he is indulging in this very Christian form of violence meted out to the man, he is with a militant eye on Islam's honest truth that they follow him in divine custom of a few elites only, this violence he hears on his coinage which though is Intifada as line which is in the language Arabic. For an overview of the multiple uses of the Sirens, see Vic de Donder 1992. 7.

What is at stake is not a resemblance between a violent man and a peaceful organiser of the poor, and even less a play upon words. There is no longer a man or a monstrous thinker, since each deterritorializes the other.... The animal doesn't speak as a human, but extracts from language the tonalities without meaning. . . ." (Deleuze and Guattari 1975, p. 40.) 9. Here we should also recall the flag then in a process of his demonstration Lacan's seminar "D'un Autre à l'autre" (Lacan 1968/69). In the session of June 11,1969, Lacan proposes the Trojan Horse, with its empty belly, "the empty set," hiding the dangerous object, as a good model of the big Other, where Troy itself, in extension, appears as "the Kafkaesque castle." Winning.